

**Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks**  
1420 E 6th Ave, PO Box 200701 Helena, MT 59620-0701  
(406) 444-2452

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST**

### **PART I. Purpose of and Need for Action**

**1. Project Title:** Great Falls Trap & Skeet Club  
P.O. Box 1058  
Great Falls, MT 59403

**2. Type of Proposed Action:** This proposal is divided into 4 activities or phases.  
Phase 1. Purchase and install two automatic trap machines Phase 2. Purchase and install two cordless voice call release units. Phase 3. Grounds enhancement i.e. build up berms, install shotgun pattern board, replace wood on rifle range, additional concrete tables & park benches. Phase 4. Replace existing electrical service.

**3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:** Range improvements will occur on site of existing 30 year old range located at 183 Ulm North Frontage Rd., Ulm, MT. Two and one half miles north of Ulm on the frontage road and approximately six miles south of Great Falls on the same frontage road. 50.5 acres located in the SW ¼ NW ¼ of Sec. 34 & in the SE ¼ NE ¼ of Sec. 33; T20N, R2E P.M.M. Cascade County, Montana.

**4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action:** MCA87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) MCA87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices)

**5. Need for the Action(s):** Phase 1 Automatic Traps: Safety is one on the primary concerns, as automatic traps do not require anyone to be in the trap house during operation.

Secondarily it will require fewer people overall for the operation, allow both single and double trap options and convenience for shooters especially during classes such as hunter education. Phase 2 Cordless Voice Call Release Units: Safety enhanced due to the lack of cords on the field as trip hazards. Voice call will require fewer personnel and improved shooting experience due to reduced reaction time for target release and overall enhanced shooting experience for group and other organized shooting events. Phase 3. Grounds Enhancement: The improvements to the existing rifle or sight-in range are necessary to correct safety concerns and bring it into compliance with NRA established guidelines. Phase 4. Improved electrical systems: Replacement of antiquated and inadequate electrical systems will insure safe, continuous and uninterrupted power to for the adjacent overnight parking/camping area, the club house, communications systems, computer systems and lighting. Improved electrical system will enable availability of on-site water system.

#### **6. Objectives for the Action(s):**

The objective is to provide a safe, more efficient operation of the ranges, reduction in number of essential personnel, and increased variety of safe shooting opportunities on the range(s). This will ultimately result in better training or educational environment for the club, other user organizations, law enforcement, hunter education, and any other additional public uses.

#### **7. Map:**



Date: March 19, 2007

Farm: Nmbr

Tract: Nmbr

Sec 33,34 Twnshp 20N Range 2E

COUNTY



USDA  
Farm Service Agency



This map is for USDA-FSA Program administration only. There is no guarantee or representation as to the accuracy, currency, suitability or reliability for any other purpose. The user accepts the data "As Is" and assumes all risks associated with its use.

**Figure 1** - Area Map of Great Falls Trap and Skeet Club, with marked locations of proposed actions. Legend for map follows at Figure 2.

# Explanation of the Aerial Photograph of the Great Falls Trap and Skeet Club

(The photograph is the following page.)

The club is within the acreages marked 22.4 and 27.4 the photograph. The alphabetical letters are explained below.

A. The proposed location of the new pattern board. The present location is at the arrow pointing north from G and shooting is done to the west.

B, C, and D. This is the location of the three existing trap houses that have no traps installed. All firing on the trap fields is to the north.

E to F. These are the seven traps that have no walkway connecting them to the major east- west walkway.

F to G. This is the part of the east-west sidewalk that we would like to raise to the same level as the rest of the sidewalk.

H, I and J. These are the three traps where we propose the installation of the wireless voice calls.

K. The proposed site of the 1500 gallon cistern. This cistern will service the 60 camper spots that are between K and just west of the letter E.

## **Figure 2 - Legend/Explanation of Figure 1 map of Great Falls Trap and Skeet Club.**

### **8. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:**

Range is approximately 50.5 acres, but improvements are limited to a much smaller area with Phase 3 range enhancements covering a broader area with the improved berms for the pistol and rifle area.

### **9. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project):**

The area affected is the existing 30 year old Great Falls Trap and Skeet Club on 50.5 acres approximately 2.5 miles north of Ulm on the north or west side of Interstate Highway 15.

**10. Description of Project:** In Accordance With (IAW) contracts agreements with Fish, Wildlife & Parks, and all projects are to be completed by June 30, 2007.

See paragraph 2 for outline of proposed actions.

Phase 1 replaces two older manual traps with two automatic traps.

Phase 2 will be the installation of two cordless voice call release units.

Phase 3 will build up the existing berm on the rifle range to improved safety standards. The old berm will be used as the core for the new "U" shaped berm. Dirt will be pushed from about 50 yards in front of the berm. No additional dirt should be needed from off site. The completed berm will be 16' high with 30' wings from 8'-10' high. Both sides of the maintenance road to the berm will be ditched and a culvert added to prevent erosion and water build-up. The berm will then be hydro-seeded to stabilize the berm and prevent erosion. These enhancements will improve the deteriorated berm system over the old berms to bring them in compliance with several safety issues and to meet the current NRA safety standards. A new Shotgun Patterning Board will be fabricated and installed. Old wooden structures on rifle range will be replaced and two additional concrete table and 3 benches installed along the trap line.

Phase 4 Replace older electrical system to 30 camping/RV spots used during shooting events and upgrading electrical service for the facility to service improved lighting, communications and computer systems for the main facility. The electric improvements will essentially overlay the older system, but does require digging up older system and relaying new electric utility

**11. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:**

(a) **Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>
Northwest Energy	Electrical hookup to new transformer

**Funding:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$15,000

**12. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups:** Cascade County Sheriff's Department, the Great Falls Police Department, Montana Highway Patrol, Boy Scouts, Air Force and Army National Guard, retriever club, hunter's education, 4-H, etc.

**13. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement:** Proposed range improvements and safety enhancements had been

discussed within the membership of the club and with the associated project vendors and contractors. No public involvement was deemed necessary.

**14. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

**15. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:**

James W. Burman  
2398 Old US Highway 91  
Cascade, MT 59421  
(406) 468-2751  
jwjlburman@aol.com

**16. Other Pertinent Information:**

Shooting range applications require the participant's governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range funding assistance. Resolution Date: June 24, 2005

**PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

Abbreviated Checklist - The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmental sensitive areas)

Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				X		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				X		#2
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				X		
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		#5
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				X		
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				X		
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		

**Comments** (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

**2. & 5.** There are no live streams or ponds on the site and no delineated wetlands.

**Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.**

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below

1. Social structures and cultural diversity				X		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				X		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				X		
4. Agricultural production				X		#4
5. Human health				X		#5
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				X		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				X		#7
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				X		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				X		
10. Demands for government services				X		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				X		

**Comments** (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

4. The site is adjacent to surrounding agricultural land.

5. Range site plans, construction and the ongoing operational and maintenance plans meet the standards of safety for the range participants and the public at large.

7. Range will provide year round controlled access and fulfils a need for a range to accommodate law enforcement training, hunter education, bow-hunter safety, and public shooting.

### **Part III. Environmental Consequences**

**Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur?** NO



**Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant?** This proposed action has no impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no extreme hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

**Identification of the Preferred Alternatives:**

The proposed alternative A, alternative B and the no action alternative were considered.

- **Alternative A** is as described in paragraph 10 (Description of Project) where dirt for the backstops/berms will be “pushed” up from on site and other improvements as noted. The other improvements are to enhance safety and expand range operations, i.e. new traps, Voice Call release system, improved electrical systems, etc.
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** area will remain as an active trap and skeet range with rifle range/sight in facility.

**Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:** Two alternatives have been considered, A (Proposed Alternative) and B (No Action Alternative). There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent.

Neither the proposed alternative (A) nor the no action alternative (B) would have any significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

- There are beneficial consequences to Acceptance of alternatives **A** to provide an improved safety environment for shotgun, pistol and rifle shooting, law enforcement training and hunter, education.
- The No Action Alternative would be not to improve the range and continue on with present shooting activities. Land use would remain the same. Present activities include trap, skeet, 5 stand, rifle and pistol shooting without the improved safety and improvements. Therefore the proposed alternative is the prudent alternative.

**Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:**

NONE

**List and explain proposed mitigative measures (stipulations):**

NONE

**Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:**

Jim Burman, Great Falls Trap and Skeet Club

**PART IV NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT**

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. None of the project reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being proposed are on properties owned by the Great Falls Trap and Skeet Club. The low impact activities proposed and the increased recreational opportunity indicates that this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative (A). The 30 year history of the Great Falls Trap and Skeet Club providing shooting opportunities to its members and the public indicates support for the proposed alternative. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative (A) for the Great Falls Trap and Skeet Club range improvements.

**EA prepared by:** GENE R. HICKMAN  
Ecological Assessments  
Helena, MT 59602

**Date Completed:** April 22, 2007

**PART IV. EA CONCLUSION SECTION**

**Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:**

None required.

**Describe public involvement, if any:**

None